

Global Standards: Policies & Politics

Opening Remarks

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It is my pleasure to welcome you this morning to the NIST Centennial Symposium on Standards in the Global Economy on behalf of Dr. Karen Brown, Acting Director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology. Karen is unable to be here today, but she sends her kindest regards and best wishes for a successful symposium.

We are honored to have five of NIST's former Directors here today—Lou Branscomb, Ernest Ambler, John Lyons, Arati Prabhakar, and Ray Kammer.

Today is a celebration of the long-standing partnership between industry, standards developing organizations, and NIST. Through this partnership, we've developed standards that have met and will continue to meet U.S. national and international needs for sound technology and for the continued protection of health, safety, and the environment.

As you know, NIST staff members have long participated in numerous technical committees, working groups, and advisory groups of many standards developing organizations, both in the United States and throughout the world.

In today's Symposium, you will hear examples of past successes and suggestions for new topics and new standards to meet the needs of the future.

First, we will hear from selected leaders in the global policy and political arena . . . and we are pleased to have with us here today the leaders of ANSI, ISO, and IEC . . . as well as the leaders of many other standards developing organizations.

For the second part of the program, we've selected a sectoral focus since that's the way the United States approaches standards. You'll hear speakers from industry, standards developing organizations, and NIST discuss standards achievements and future needs in telecommunications, information technology, semiconductors, optical technology, transportation, materials, manufacturing, and, after lunch, building and

construction, where the emphasis will be on fire and building safety.

After that, the leaders of ASME and ASTM will share with us their perspectives on standards partnerships, and in particular, on their long-standing partnerships with NIST to develop standards that meet both national and global needs.

Following those presentations, a panel of experts will discuss the U.S. National Standards Strategy, which was developed recently by ANSI in collaboration with many of the organizations attending this Symposium today.

The National Standards Strategy provides a framework for the United States to move forward to address sectoral needs within a national setting. It sets forth challenges for all of us to meet as we work to ensure that U.S. technology plays a major role in standards used worldwide and that essential requirements for protecting health, safety, and the environment are met. During the discussion, you will hear the viewpoints of industry, standards developing organizations, and government agencies as they work together to make the goals of the strategy a reality. Finally, we will close with some historical perspectives and a few observations based on today's events.

It is now my pleasure to introduce our first speaker, Dr. Arati Prabhakar. Arati is currently a partner with U.S. Venture Partners located in Menlo Park, California. From 1993 to 1997, Arati was the Director of NIST, and from 1986 to 1993, she was a program manager and then director of the Microelectronics Technology Office at the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency. While Arati was the Director of NIST, she took particular interest in the U.S. standards process. In addition to signing the first MOU between ANSI and NIST, she took other actions that promoted a sense of community among the stakeholders in the standards area, and these actions prepared the soil from which the National Standards Strategy ultimately emerged.